(a) whether it would be prudent and beneficial to post Tamil knowing High Commissioners in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore where the majority of Indians are Tamilians;

(b) in this connection would it not be better to take a policy decision to prefer and post a person as a High Commissioner provided he/she is familiar with the Indian languanges to which majority of Indian people belong; and

(c) if it has not been done so far would it be done soon within a time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Heads of Mission are appointed keeping in view a wide range of criteria and qualifications which are not limited to the knowledge of languages. Our Missions abroad have always maintained a close rapport with all sections of the Indian Diaspora.

Seat in UNSC

2600. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that since 1991-92, India has not been able to get a seat in the United Nations Security Council probably due to our inability to round up necessary number of votes to support our candidature; and

(b) if so, now with better standing in our economic scenario, and our voice being heard by the international communities with better relevance and reverence, whether intensive diplomatic efforts would be initiated to get a non-permanent seat be channeled judiciously by taking advice/ help/assistance of friendly Nations, without, of course, compromising our long-cherished ideals of non-alignment and universal peace and tranquility?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) India has contested for a non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council for seven two-year terms, namely, 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92 and 1997-98, and was elected for each of these terms except the last, India has presented its candidature for a non-permanent seat of the Security Council for the term 2011-12. The Government are taking necessary steps to mobilise

support for India's candidature. The Government are steadfast in its pursuit of an independent foreign policy in the service of India's interests.

Passports of the people from J&K

2601. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the passport office has set up troublesome process for issuing the passport to the migrants/residents of Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether these migrants of J&K are being denied the passport facility even though they are settled in Delhi for the last twenty years; and

(d) whether these migrants are being asked by passport office to submit residential proof of Kashmir when they are settled in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, the residents of Jammu & Kashmir are issued passports as expeditiously as possible, after prescribed security verification by the concerned agencies.

(b) This procedure has been laid down by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the light of security situation in the State.

(c) and (d) No. Migrants living outside Jammu & Kashmir for more than five years are issued passports after normal police verification.

Indian territories claimed by foreign countries

†2602. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the parts of Indian territory which have been claimed by other countries, as their territories;

(b) the name of such countries;

(c) the area of land claimed by such countries; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.